



Flight Jacket

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Marine Corps Air Station Miramar

August 23, 2002

Navy, Marine Corps ground Sea Knight helicopters

Story by Cpl. Scott Whittington

MCAS Miramar

The 291 CH-46 Sea Knight helicopters used by the Navy and Marine Corps have been temporarily grounded due to a discovery of a cracked bellcrank Monday by Marine technicians attached to Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 29 from Cherry Point, N.C.

"Failure of the Forward Longitudinal Differential Bellcrank results in possible loss of aircraft control," said 1st Lt. Greg M. Scott, media officer, Miramar.

Currently, the Marine Corps uses the CH-46 helicopter as troop transports while the Navy uses them for vertical replenishment.

"All Sea Knights will be grounded until an eddy current inspection of the bellcrank can be performed. The inspections take approximately three maintenance hours per aircraft. All Sea Knights will require bellcrank inspections. Shipboard aircraft may take more time to perform this inspection, due to limited work space," said Scott.

Those aircraft that have cracked bellcranks will require a replacement. Currently there are 82 bellcranks available in the supply system.

There are approximately 60 Sea Knights total on Miramar and Pendleton and 22 on North Island Naval Air Station. Approximately 35 Marine CH-46Es and 10 Navy CH-46Ds are currently deployed.



Cpl. Anthony M. Bacon, Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 163, CH-46E Sea Knight mechanical/aerial observer, puts a cover plate over the aircraft's rotor tracking device. The device monitors blade speed and allows the pilot to see any unusual activity in the rotors. Photo by Lance Cpl. Robert W. Wynkoop

See **CH-46**, page 11

Miramar firefighters return home from Pines Fire

Story by Staff Sgt. John C. DiDomenico

MCAS Miramar

In July, the Pines Fire burned out of control for more than a week. Twelve firefighters from the Miramar Fire Department's Engine 62 and Brush Truck 62 joined their fellow firefighters on the fire lines and recently returned here safely.

Approximately 3,200 personnel from surrounding area fire departments and organizations battled the fire, which was inadvertently started when a National Guard helicopter clipped power lines in the area. The fire destroyed approximately 63,000 acres and 33 homes, and cost more than \$20 million to fight.

Structural Engine Company Engine 62, consisting of four firefighters, was the first Miramar Fire Department crew to respond. They joined a San Diego strike team for 12

days to keep the fire from escaping the canyons and triage (protect) homes in the area.

"We were first assigned to prevent the fire

from crossing the S-2 interstate. However, the fire changed directions and we tried to hold it on the west side of the interstate,"



A Miramar firefighter clears brush and debris during battle against the Pines Fire. Twelve Miramar firefighters joined the 3,200 firefighters on scene. Photo courtesy of MCAS Fire Department.

said Chris Vail, acting captain, from El Cajon. "Our mission then became structure protection. We went ahead of the fire to clear brush and debris away from homes and the Boy Scout camp or shutting off propane tanks."

"You had to keep an open mind," San Diego native Douglas Bouck, acting engineer. "It was perfect conditions, and the fire was unpredictable."

In early August, Miramar's Brush Truck 62 with an additional four firefighters joined the battle as part of the brush strike team for 10 days. Battalion Chief Jeffrey Wilkerson served as the strike team leader and Fire Inspector Don Holsapple served as the facility unit leader. Their mission was to work off road to contain the fire between the various fire breaks, roads and highways.

See **Fire**, page 11

Inside

Weekend forecast from Miramar's weather station



75°

Today



77°

Saturday



81°

Sunday

**Miramar
Firefighters
to the
rescue**



Page 3

**Today's
forecast
is...**



Page 8

Japan sends political leaders to SoCal for taste of Semper Fi

Story by Gunnery Sgt. Matt Hevezi

MCAS Miramar

CAMP PENDLETON — On a typical sunny Southern California afternoon, the ‘crack, crack, crack’ of 5.56mm semi-automatic gunfire echoes through the browned scrub-brush covered hills at this sprawling 125,000-acre Marine Corps training base.

Observers, casually dressed, yet seemingly out of place for such events stood behind a line of trigger-pulling Marines. The four observers on the firing line were Japanese Diet members, Japan’s political equivalent of U.S. congressmen.

They came to Southern California for more than just target practice though. The men are very interested in discovering what makes U.S. Marines tick and traveled all the way from Tokyo to find out.

After visiting Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, and learning about the jets and helicopters that operate out of one of the Corps’ busiest air stations, the group came here to Camp Pendleton. The stop at Pendleton was the group’s second of a two-day educational mission. They came to find out a little more about the kind of men and women — there are more than 37,000 of them based here — who would support combat operations and risk their lives if ever called to protect Japan as part of the U.S.-Japan security treaty. Five hours before arriving at the firing range, the Diet members sat tableside with 1st Marine Expeditionary Force Deputy Commander, Brig. Gen. Keith J. Stalder, as one of his staff officers presented a detailed unclassified briefing on how I MEF trains, operates and provides

senior combatant commanders a powerful war-ready force of Marines for any short-notice assignment in the Pacific or Central Asia region. Many of Camp Pendleton’s Marines are recent combat veterans, having just returned from missions in Afghanistan.

Much of the briefing told of the new post-9/11 challenges facing Marine Corps combat commanders. Stalder explained how the Corps is facing down the challenges and told his inquisitive guests beside him, that Marine Corps combat units must simultaneously prepare for new varieties of unconventional warfare while still maintaining the skills and combat power to fight in a conventional war such as Desert Storm.

Stalder said methods used in recent combat action in Afghanistan mostly fell into the conventional warfare category, but that the Corps is pushing hard to develop new ways to counter the new battlefield threats not seen in past conflicts.

Lieutenant Col. Mark VanKan, a I MEF planning officer on Stalder’s staff, told the Diet members that the I MEF is the largest of the Corps’ three major combat outfits. Outlining the unit’s mission, VanKan said that I MEF must work aggressively with private industry and the Army, Navy and Air Force in order to develop new technologies, tactics, and warfighting concepts.

The familiarization tour through Pendleton and Miramar marked a first for the Japanese Diet members which included Yasuhisa Shiozaki, Yoshitaka Shindo, Yasuaki Yamaguchi, Yoshitaka Sakurada and Mikio Shimoji. The men agreed that such tours are vital education steps for Japan’s political leaders given the close relationship



Diet members tour Miramar and Pendleton during two-day tour to learn how Marine leaders think and prepare Leathernecks for combat. Photo by Gunnery Sgt. Matt Hevezi

between Japan and U.S. on defense and regional security challenges. They said they will encourage others in Japan political leadership positions to attend a future tour.

“It is very important to know how military commanders think,” said Shiozaki, who attended high school in Northern California’s affluent Marin County and studied at Harvard University. “If we end up asking for U.S. support [in a crisis situation], we will have a better understanding of how the Marines operate and know more about your warfighting [philosophy].

“In order for Japan to have better security, we have to get to know so many things,” Shiozaki said. “This trip for me was a good chance to get to know Marines. “I’m sure this will help us in the future policy-making process on the security front.”

One of the Marines who rubbed elbows with Shiozaki and Shimoji was 21-year-old Cpl. Corey Wardrop, an infantryman from Tustin, assigned to Company C, 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment. Wardrop and a group of Marines from 1/5 sat down to lunch with the Diet members inside of a Marine Corps chow hall.

Wardrop served in Okinawa as a lance corporal in 2000 as part of the Unit Deployment Program. Units assigned UDP duty rotate in and out of Okinawa from stateside bases for six-month stints. The Marines often support the combat-ready 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, the Corps’ only Japan-based MEU.

The Diet members were scheduled for a similar tour of Air Force installations in Colorado Springs, Colo.

Service members become proud Americans



Sgt. Joon M. Lee, H&HS separations auditor and Cpl. Wan K. Lok, H&HS finance clerk, are sworn in as American citizens aboard the USS Constellation.

Story by Sgt. Mark P. Ledesma

MCAS Miramar

Seven Miramar Marines and one Miramar sailor were among 147 servicemembers who proudly earned the right to be American citizens Tuesday, when they pledged their allegiance to the United States aboard the USS Constellation, anchored at Naval Air Station North Island.

The Miramar personnel were Sgt. Juan Valles-Guzman, Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron, Sgt. Joon Lee, H&HS, Cpl. Wan Lok, H&HS, Cpl. Christine Krezel, H&HS, SSgt. Vincente Baldelomar, Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 242, LCpl. Carlton McLeod, VMFA-242, SSgt. Michael Spencer, Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 361 and DT3 Joseph Garcia, 13th Dental Company.

According to Vicki Alba, Navy Region Southwest U.S. Citizenship program manager, the naturalization ceremony was monumental.

“It’s the first time in the history of the United States that we have had so many active duty servicemembers sworn in as United States citizens,” said Alba. “Generally you’ll have a few servicemembers and the traditional ceremonies in the civilian sectors, but (this ceremony) was one of a kind.”

According to 21 year-old Cpl. Lok, H&HS finance clerk, the ceremony was overwhelming.

“I was surprised to see the ceremony was big,” said Lok a Fort Lauderdale, Fl., native, a former Chinese citizen. “I

thought we were just going to take an oath and that would be it.”

Judith Keep, a federal district court judge of Southern California, swore in servicemembers from 36 countries including Mexico, the Philippines, United Kingdom, China and South Korea, as American citizens.

According to Keep, the ceremony was wonderful.

“I’ve never witnessed anything like this (naturalization ceremony) where I’m standing on a stage and looking out at all the uniforms and flags. It was such a wonderful feeling. I was very lucky to experience it. I did not know much about non-citizens being in the military until I volunteered to be here for this ceremony,” said Keep, who has been a judge 22 years. “I think all of us who witnessed the ceremony have had our patriotism renewed. Just watching all of the servicemembers who really want to become citizens makes you feel really grateful to be a citizen.”

According to 27 year-old Sgt. Lee, H&HS separations auditor, it’s better to serve this country as a U.S. citizen and not as a Korean citizen.

“I’ve always wanted to be a U.S. citizen,” said Lee a Baltimore, Md., native, and has been in the Marine Corps for five years.

“Hopefully more of these ceremonies will happen,” concluded Alba. She was also awarded a civilian meritorious award during the ceremony for her contribution with the ceremony and helping numerous people become U.S. citizens.



Flight Jacket

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Miramar firefighters here for assistance

Story by SSgt. John C. DiDomenico

MCAS Miramar

Twelve firefighters from the MCAS Miramar Fire Department's Engine 62 and Brush Truck 62 recently assisted fellow firefighters and organizations from the surrounding areas battle the Pines Fire.

According to Fire Chief Jerry Sack, in the last four years, the MCAS Fire Department has responded to numerous wildland fires on and off the installation. During the Pines Fire, they provided more than 130 man days of support.

Structural Engine Company Engine 62 joined a San Diego strike team for 12 days to keep the fire from escaping the canyons and protect homes in the area. Miramar's Brush Truck 62 joined the battle as part of the brush strike team for 10 days to contain the fire between various fire breaks, roads and highways.

Firefighters John Meyer and Ron Pickett were also dispatched as fire line medics with the hand crews working in the already burned areas to overhaul any hot spot and put out remaining fires.

According to Miramar firefighters Robert Diaz and Dan Regis, they established a good rapport with their counterparts on the Pines Fire front lines.

"After working with the other fire departments and agencies, they know they can count on MCAS Miramar's assistance," Diaz stated. "We have a large respond area on and off the base. We are here to assist them when needed."

"The surrounding departments are willing to call on us," Regis added. "Not everyone knows the station has a fire department. They think we are military or know of the



crash fire and rescue personnel."

Miramar's firefighters receive extensive wildland fire training such as structure triage (protection) and brush triage to prepare for fire season. The fire department has taken an aggressive approach to fire prevention by monitoring and prohibiting high hazard operations.

"We work with Public Works to cut and

grade the fire breaks, fuel breaks and fire roads in the East and West Miramar areas," said Sack. "During the fire season, we cancel all high hazard operations which could ignite a wildland fire. If a high hazard operation must be conducted, we are ready with a brush truck for emergencies."

Depending on how hot the weather is, fire

season runs from June through October or November.

"Unfortunately, this will not be the only large and destructive wildland fire this season," Sack stated. "The MCAS Fire Department is trained, equipped and has the required logistical support in place to fight fire aggressively and safely."

Meritorious Service Award



Colonel Gregory L. Goodman, chief of staff, Marine Corps Air Bases Western Area and Ann Evans, director of Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society, Miramar (left) presented Nancy Nicholson, a volunteer at the Society and wife of Lt. Col. Pete Nicholson, with the Meritorious Service Award. This award is the Society's highest volunteer award, recognizing outstanding service and unusual achievement of significant benefit to the Society. Nancy has been with the Society at Miramar since Sept. 2001. Photo by Cpl. Scott Whittington



Hollywood Star visits Miramar Marines

Actor and author Bruce Campbell greeted Marines at the Base Exchange Wednesday for an autograph session. Campbell also presented his new book, "If Chins Could Kill: Confessions of a B Movie Actor," as he met with hundreds of service and family members. Campbell, starred in "Escape From L.A.," "Running Time," " Fargo," "The Evil Dead Trilogy," "Xena: Warrior Princess" and "Hercules: The Legendary Journeys." Campbell, a Detroit native, said he enjoyed the opportunity to show his support for Miramar Marines because

it let him show his personal gratitude for everything the military, specifically the Marines, have done for the nation since the terrorist attacks, Sept. 11, 2001. Lance Cpl. Elijah C. Gifford, repairman, Tactical Air Command Center, Marine Tactical Air Control Squadron-38, said he is a long-time fan of Campbell and appreciates the support Marines like himself receive from celebrities like Campbell. The Ocala, Fla., native added, "It was a convenient way to meet a celebrity I would not otherwise be able to see in person." Photo by Cpl. James S. McGregor

Miramar Mail

Question: "Why is San Diego's BAH rates lower than other places that have a lower cost of living?"

*Cpl. Randy Rikes, plane captain
VMFA-134*

Answer: Basic Allowance for Housing for San Diego is among the highest in the nation. San Diego's vacancy rate for housing currently hovers around one percent. As long as housing remains at such a premium here, rental rates and mortgages will continue to outpace BAH. Many Marines stationed here are faced with the reality that their pay and allowances don't seem to go quite as far as they do in other regions of the country. The high cost of living in this area is one of the reasons that developing new family housing for Miramar-based Marines and Sailors is at the top of my list of priorities.

Editor's Note: Marines and Sailors desiring to submit questions to the commanding general concerning policies and regulations for the Air Station can send an e-mail to either ombpaoflight@miramar.usmc.mil or didomenicojc@miramar.usmc.mil. Questions will be selected and answered in an upcoming issue of the Flight Jacket in the Miramar Mail column.



Brig. Gen. Jon A. Gallinetti

Understanding the BAH Rate System

Compiled by G-1 and Public Affairs

MCAS Miramar

The BAH rate is set by the Per Diem Travel and Transportation Allowance Committee. Here is a sample of married BAH rates: \$708 Kansas City, \$1185 DC Metro Area, \$1034 Camp Pendleton, \$1132 San Diego, \$529 29 Palms, \$604 Camp Lejuene. Only the DC area has a higher BAH than San Diego. The following information is from the Per Diem Travel and Transportation Allowance Committee web site on how they arrive at the BAH rate.

The BAH uses a civilian-based method of measuring comparable housing costs that is superior to the old VHA housing survey that measured members' spending on housing. First, members no longer have the hassle of the annual VHA surveys. Under VHA/BAQ, members who scrimped on housing, then reported low housing expenditures, only reinforced, or drove down, already low allowances. This mainly occurred among junior members, whose limited after-tax income may have forced them to accept inadequate housing and then report low costs on the survey.

The Services also recognized the VHA/BAQ created a similar, but opposite, bias for some senior officer/enlisted grades. Under the old system, if a member opted to use a greater share of disposable income for larger or more expensive housing, relative to the local market, and reported this expenditure on the VHA survey, it tended to inflate reported costs and thus allowances. Basic Al-

lowance for Housing eliminates both these low-end and high-end biases.

In computing BAH rates, the committee includes local price data of rentals, average utilities and insurance. They collect the data annually, in the spring and summer when housing markets are most active. Their data includes apartments, town homes and duplexes, as well as single-family rental units of various bedroom sizes. They recognize the importance of accurate data and make every effort to obtain maximum reliability.

For example, in selecting specific units to measure, the committee uses a multi-tiered screening process to ensure that the units and neighborhoods selected are appropriate. The first screening considers reasonable commuting criteria, generally defined as 20 miles or one hour during rush hour, eliminating units that fall outside these limits. Next, they check if a selected unit is in a neighborhood in which members would choose to reside. Using the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System data, as a key to where members live, they focus on neighborhoods in which the top 80% of our members live to avoid sampling slum, high-crime, or undesirable neighborhoods that members have already avoided.

Finally, the committee uses an income screening process, to identify appropriate neighborhoods. For example, in pricing three and four bedroom single-family units (senior enlisted/officers), they know member income in these grades is between \$60 and \$100 thousand. They select three and four bedroom single-family units in neighbor-

hoods where the civilian income is in this range. When the committee prices one bedroom apartments (junior single enlisted), they focus on neighborhoods where the civilian income is consistent with the \$20 to \$30 thousand income level that is typical for these grades. For comparison purposes, civilian salary equals the sum of military basic pay, average BAH, BAS plus tax advantage.

The committee obtains current data from multiple sources, employing a "checks and balances" approach to ensure reliability and accuracy.

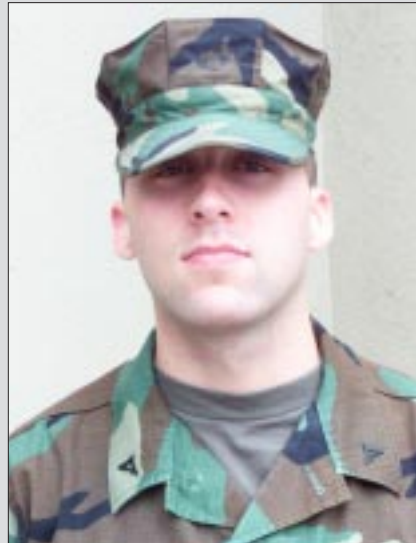
Current residential vacancies, identified in local newspapers and real estate rental listings, are an important source of data. Vacancies are selected at random, and subjected to the screening process. Telephone interviews establish the availability and exact location of each unit sampled.

They designed the sample to obtain a statistical confidence level of 95% or higher. Apartment and real estate management companies are also contacted to identify units for rental pricing. Where available, the committee also contacts fort/post/base housing referral offices, to tap local military expertise and gain insights into the local concerns of our members.

Finally, DoD and the Services conduct on-site evaluations at various locations to confirm and ensure reliability and accuracy of the cost data. Future enhancements include examining potential uses of the internet as well as housing data available from other government agencies.

Remarks

if you could ask the commanding general anything, what would you ask?



"Why do the most technical (military occupational specialties) have the highest cutting scores"

*Lance Cpl. Brian E. Dickert
micro-miniature electronics tech.
MALS-11*



"Why aren't we allowed to wear coveralls in places like the post office and McDonalds?"

*Lance Cpl. Douglas D. Terrill
avionics tech.
HMH-465*



"Why doesn't Miramar have the new digital cammies yet?"

*Cpl. Dorenzo L. Whatley
postal clerk
H&HS*

NOW TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

Do you have news? Did you take a newsworthy photo? Would you like to see your name in the Flight Jacket? The newspaper staff encourages Marines to submit commentaries, editorials or other articles or photographs. Story submissions can be sent by mail to: FJ Editor, H&HS PAO PO Box 452013, San Diego, CA 92145; by fax to 577-6001 ATTN: FJ Editor; or send an e-mail to ombpaoflight@miramar.usmc.mil or didomenico@miramar.usmc.mil.

Two Marines; Brothers by blood, Corps

Story by Sgt. R.C. Kibel

MCAS Miramar

NAVAL AMPHIBIOUS BASE, CORONADO – Marines are often referred to as a “Band of Brothers.” In the case of Maj. Carl D. Burtner and Sgt. Michael J. Burtner of 2nd Battalion, 24th Marines, from Chicago, the phrase can be taken literally.

Esprit de Corps flows in their blood as they follow in their Marine father’s footsteps. Like his father, Maj. Burtner chose to become a commissioned officer. However, Sgt. Burtner opted for the enlisted ranks. Major Burtner enrolled in an officer’s program in 1987 with hopes of becoming a pilot. A few years later, Sgt. Burtner decided to enlist in the reserves in 1992 during a break between college and career.

They ended up at the same unit by chance. Major Burtner was separated from

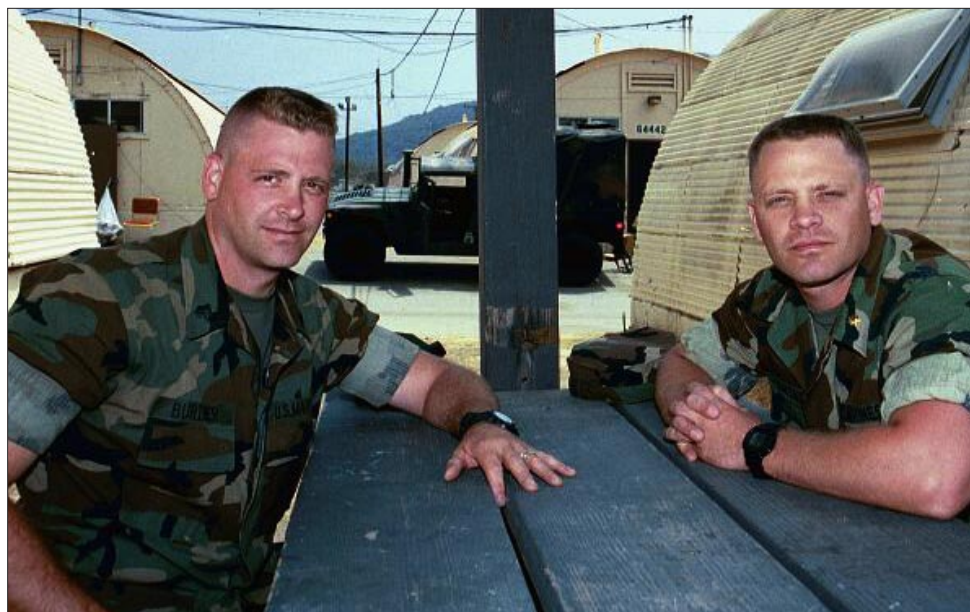
active duty in 2000.

His new job brought him back to Chicago, where they spent their childhood. Sergeant Burtner had served a term from 1992 to 1998 with 2/24 and just recently decided to return to duty in 2002.

Even though they share the same unit, they work in separate shops. Major Burtner is the administrative officer, and Sgt. Burtner, a prior grunt, is cross training into the intelligence field.

When their paths cross, they maintain the proper customs and courtesies. Major Burtner remarked, “I treat him as I would any other Marine.” Of course, outside any formal military environment, they interact as any brothers would.

This is the first time they are serving with the same unit, during the same annual training. Sergeant Burtner said, “It’s nice to see a familiar face around here.”



Brothers, Sgt. Michael Burtner (left) and Maj. Carl D. Burtner take a moment out of training with 2nd Battalion, 24th Marines at Camp Talega, Camp Pendleton. Photo by Sgt. Kevin A. Brown

MALS-42 Reservists participate in amphibious war-fighting exercise

Story by Staff Sgt. P.I. Cox

MCAS Miramar

NAVAL AMPHIBIOUS BASE, CORONADO – Marine Aviation Logistical Squadron 42 and its detachments are participating in Amphibious Orientation Training 2002, an annual amphibious war-fighting skills exercise, which culminates in a coordinated attack involving ground, aviation and naval vessels.

“This is one of the few times Marines from the squadron and its detachments have gotten together for an annual training exercise,” said Gunnery Sergeant Matthew J. Lux, quality assurance, staff noncommissioned officer in charge, MALS-42, Naval Air Station, Atlanta.

The other MALS detachments are Detachment A, Miramar, Det. B, Norfolk, Va., and Det. C, Belle Chase, La.

Although MALS-42 does not participate in the final exercise, their contribution is vital. “We work on aviation life support systems and make sure that everything the pilots needs to survive is functioning,” said

Cpl. Alejandro a. Munoz, flight equipment technician, MALS-42 Det. A, Miramar.

This includes an inside out check for leaks on the anti-exposure suits as well as the life rafts, preserver units, and oxygen and water supply.

Staff Sergeant Jose L. Prieto, staff non-commissioned officer-in-charge, flight equipment, MALS-42, Det. A, 4th Marine Aircraft Wing, Miramar, said, “We check the equipment for serviceability, tears and broken seams in the raft, the expiration date on the food, the lot number of the flares and corrosion. This is part of our 365-day and 90-day inspections.”

The MALS-42 Marines can also make equipment out of material and make repairs. Although they don’t make the Dry ‘Anti-exposure’ Suit; they make the neckpieces and booties for them because they are customized to fit each pilot.

“Most of our Marines do different things as civilians. I design refrigeration systems for supermarkets. Making blueprints and sketches is where the similarity ends,” said Prieto.



Cpl. Alejandro A. Munoz with MALS-42, Det A, Miramar, supervises Marines from MALS-39, MCAS, Camp Pendleton, as they seal CWU-62 B/P Anti-Exposure Suits for pilots. Photo by Sgt. Kevin A. Brown

MAG-42 returns to its roots

Story by Staff Sgt. P.I. Cox

MCAS Miramar

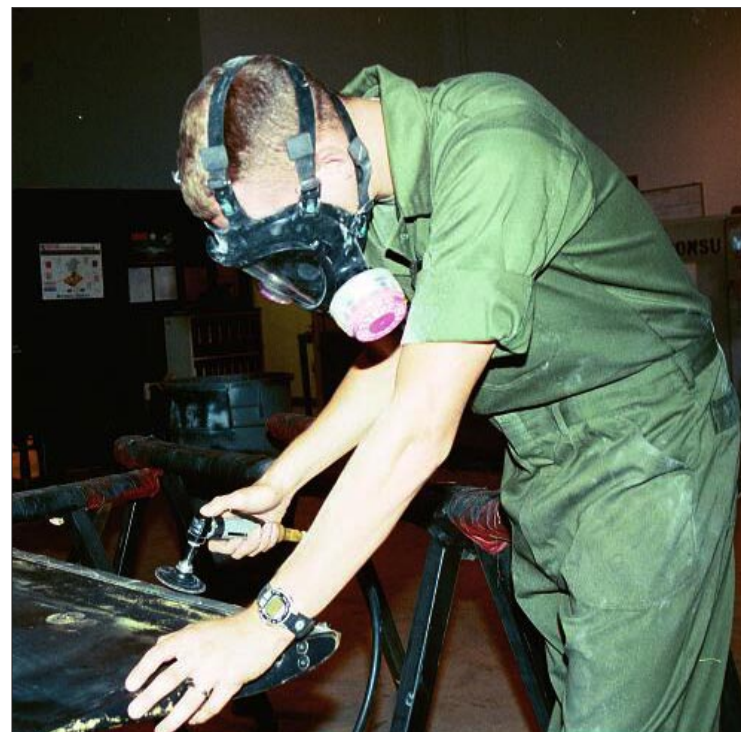
Marine Aviation Logistical Squadron 42 has a long San Diego history. It is part of Marine Aircraft Group 42, which was activated here on January 1, 1943. In June 1992, MAG-42 relocated to Atlanta.

Currently MAG-46 is located on Miramar. It is one of the two reserve aircraft groups supporting Amphibious Training Orientation 2002.

There are four Marine Aircraft Groups in the 4th Marine Aircraft Wing, Marine Reserve Forces.

The original mission of MALS-42 was to provide air defense support for west coast Naval and Marine Corps installations and to conduct airborne search and patrol, transportation, air-sea rescue, and shipping escort operations along the Pacific Coast.

When MALS-46 was deactivated in March 2001, MALS-42, Detachment A was formed here at Miramar and some of MALS-46’s former personnel were assigned to the new unit.



Corporal John W. Ritch with MALS-42, Marietta, Ga., an air frame structure mechanic, sands the leading edge of a CH-46 blade. Photo by Sgt. Kevin A. Brown

Ad Space

State of the art... antique?

Story by Lance Cpl. Robert W. Wynkoop

MCAS Miramar

Editor's note: This is the last story of a three-part series on simulators.

Security is tight. This building requires walking through a myriad of security checkpoints and locks requiring proper clearance. Hallways, lined with framed blueprints of various aircraft, seem to lead to a giant vault of America's deepest secrets. Inside, one might expect to find the newest in flight technology, or even a UFO, but behind these locked doors are actually some of the most guarded antiques in the country.

Nearly three decades ago, the U.S. military developed a new concept to revolutionize its aircraft training. Using a new machine called a "computer," mated with an actual aircraft cockpit, they created what is now known as the flight simulator.

In 1998, the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing



A Marine pilot takes advantage of an FA/18 flight simulator aboard the Air Station. Simulators save time and money training pilots in the art of flight on the ground.
Photo by Lance Cpl. Robert W. Wynkoop

training center here became home to several of these flight simulators and now is the first step in sending a new Hornet pilot to the Fleet

Marine Force, said John Hartley, Computer Operations Maintenance contracting officer's representative.

Hartley, a Department of Defense Civil Service civilian, has been working with Miramar's simulators for 22 years.

"I've probably logged more F/A-18 simulator flight hours than anyone I know, except I've never flown the actual plane," joked the San Clemente native. "I'm a *simulator* pilot."

Simulator training starts even before students climb inside the cockpit, Hartley said. In the computer based training or CBT, pilots go through a self-taught program on aircraft systems. They are tested on the curriculum covered in the CBT before moving on to the simulators.

Following CBT training, pilots work in the part task trainer or PTT. This small, basic type of simulator has less instrumentation than an actual F/A-18 and mainly trains pilots to read their radar screens, Hartley added.

Another portion of the approximately year-long training syllabus is the operational flight trainer or OFT. This simulator is larger than the PTT and much more sophisticated in technology. It uses three television tube sets reflected off of a collimating mirror to give the pilot a three-dimensional view, said Hartley. All instrumentation is the same as in the actual fighter jet. The simulator requires an operator to monitor the computer and input scenarios for the pilot. With a price tag of approximately \$10 million, it makes one wonder why a 20 year-old system is so valuable.

Across the hall from the OFT, lies its nerve center, a room stacked wall to wall with cabinets of computers. At the time the simulator was built, it took a roomful of circuit boards and transistors to make it work. Today is no different, Hartley explained. The computer monitors sport the typical bright-green screen seen in the early 80's. It's hard to believe the plain, text only screens produce the virtual-reality environment pilots experience in the simulator.

"These simulators send all the information without any delay," Hartley said.

Once the pilots become familiar with flying and instrumentation in the OFT, they move onto the weapons tactics trainer. The WTT is a two-story dome with a dual seat cockpit of an F/A-18 positioned in the middle. Projectors, positioned in different parts of the dome, send images throughout the dome, providing the full virtual reality experience.

Pilots can see bogeys (enemy targets), and practice dog fighting skills, as well as practice flying in formation as a wing man. In another room, outside of the dome, operators control equipment malfunctions with a push of a button and instructors can sit at their flight stick and go head-to-head with the pilots, he said.

"The WTT allows for air-to-air, air-to-ground and air-to-surface combat training," Hartley said. "We can project all kinds of targets: aircraft carriers, MIGs, tanks... up to two at a time."

There are several benefits to using simulator training, but the financial savings are the most noticeable.

"Without the simulator, it would be impossible to train as many pilots as we do," Hartley explained, "It costs about ten thousand dollars an hour to fly the actual jet, but the simulator can be flown for much less."

Students seemed less concerned with the

Ad Space



The interior view of the WTT depicts realistic scenarios for pilots during a training exercises. Photo by Lance Cpl. Robert W. Wynkoop

financial impact and more pleased with the program’s results.

“The accessibility of the simulator is great,” said Navy Lt. Thomas Clark, Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 101, F/A-18 pilot. “You can’t just go to the flight line and jump in a plane, but here you can practice any type

of scenario at any time.”

Clark said pilots need to practice emergency scenarios so they can fall back on the prior training and rules instructors lay out in the beginning of the course.

“It’s a team effort,” said the Bedford, N.H. native, “you need good instructors to

get a good product.”

Aside from the virtual-reality and technical equipment, the instructors are what makes it all work, Clark said. Most instructors are either contracted civilians who were naval aviators in the past, or they are pilots who return from the FMF and give the new

pilots feedback on their flying.

However, Hartley jokes there is one piece of equipment the training simulators could not do without... the building air-conditioner. To keep the numerous rooms of circuitry from overheating, the building must maintain a constant 65 degrees.

Ad Space

Weather Station works for Miramar's safety



Lance Cpl. Pablo A. Lara, weather station weather observer, manually checks the heat index as part of an hourly manual compilation of weather data to determine the current flag condition. Wind speed and direction, air temperature and cloud height, density and visibility are also checked as part of his compilation.

Photo by Sgt. Chanin Nuntavong

Story by Sgt. Chanin Nuntavong

MCAS Miramar

Weather Station Marines work 24 hours a day, seven days a week to provide weather forecasts to Marine Corps Air Station Miramar personnel. They provide information on the weather conditions for flight routes allowing pilots to properly plan their flights. They also determine flag conditions aboard the air station.

"We operate the station 365 days a year and even though we deal with all kinds of weather, our main concern is our pilots and getting them back safely each time they go out," Staff Sgt. Jason S. Testa, weather station weather forecaster from Frankfort, N.Y.

The Weather Station is tasked with preparing weather information for the control tower, giving five-day extended forecasts, recording the cloud decks (layers of clouds), and maintaining hourly updates on a closed circuit television system.

The unit consists of weather observers and forecasters, who collaborate and research weather conditions from satellite imagery and radar readings to produce timely and accurate weather reports for the Miramar area.

Observers collect the information and forecasters develop an outline of what is heading toward the air station.

Testa said today's meteorology is mostly computer generated, relying heavily on radar and satellite imagery. However, the Marines also receive extensive training in climatology and the traditional tools of meteorology.

"The radar and satellite imagery are great to have, but you never know when they are going to break down," he explained. "If we are out in the field, we may not have these things on hand, so it's essential to have a good understanding of climatologic knowledge."

For the times when these high-tech tools

are not at hand, the weather observers become even more crucial. Their manual compilation of weather data such as wind speeds and direction, air temperatures and cloud height, density and visibility are the information needed to determine if inclement weather is near.

"We conduct manual observations every hour, logging the current weather conditions," said Lance Cpl. Pablo A. Lara, weather station weather observer from Chicago.

According to Cpl. Kimberly A. Steel, weather station weather observer from Philadelphia, observers go outside and take readings from various thermometers. Thermometers are used to acquire the heat index used to determine flag conditions by measuring air temperature and humidity.

While outside, observers also look to the sky to predict incoming weather and what pilots will have to fly through, by reading the elevation of clouds.

"After we gather the information, the forecaster updates the closed circuit television which broadcasts to every squadron ready room on station," said Testa.

Inside the weather station, computers show observers and forecasters the bigger picture. The computers receive information gathered from other areas of the world to better understand what will happen here in the future. Satellite images are also used to forecast the weather.

When going on military exercises or operations, many hazards must be considered. Being unprepared for bad weather can make these hazards more dangerous. Weather Station Marines provide weather forecasts to unit commanders every day in an effort to make training safer.

"Even though they make the ultimate decision whether to fly or not, we are responsible for letting the pilots know what weather they may encounter. We have to remember that other Marines lives are in our hands," said Testa.



Lance Cpl. Pablo A. Lara, reads the area heat stress monitor. This monitor computes the wet bulb global temperature index and plays a key role in heat index computation.

Photo by Sgt. Chanin Nuntavong

Ad Space

Marines show who's best in triathlon competition

Story by Cpl. Nicholas Tremblay

Emblem Staff

MARINE CORPS LOGISTICS BASE, ALBANY – The morning sun struggled to shine over the tops of tall pine trees at the Georgia Veterans Memorial State Park. In the dim light, more than 130 athletes eagerly awaited the start of the Second Annual Georgia Veterans Triathlon Saturday.

The race started at 7 a.m., and 11 Marines from Marine Corps Logistics Base Albany were pumped with adrenaline, ready to take to the water.

The race began with the crack of a loud gunshot, and athletes hurried into the warm water of Lake Blackshere to complete the first leg of the race, a half-mile swim.

“Just the adrenaline rush before you even start wakes you up,” said Staff Sgt. Scott Erickson, supply operations chief. “You’re ready to go before the gun even goes off. Then it’s no holds-barred, you just go for it.”

Before the start of the race, the Marines joked about who of the small group would finish first. This was the first triathlon competition for some Marines, while others had competed in a handful of them.

The Marines weren’t there to take home the first-place trophy, but instead to egg each other on in friendly competition. Most of them trained a few months before the triathlon to prepare their bodies for the challenging race, but few expected to keep up with the seasoned triathletes competing in the race.

Although the Marines did not plan to take first, they, nevertheless, pushed themselves to the limit to achieve their best personal finishing time. For instance Sgt. Gregory Marsh, S-6 network technician, was motivated by adrenaline and not wanting “the guy behind me to beat me.” Marsh and others overcame the pain pulsating through their aching muscles to complete the triathlon.

“There is nothing fun about it, everything is awful,” said Marsh, a third time triathlete. “You get off the bike and your legs are jelly and you still have 15 guys in front of you [who] you got to try and beat. But you don’t have a chance.”

Marsh was the first Marine to cross the finish line at one hour and 14 minutes after the start of the race, which was nine minutes behind the first finisher. He admits he would’ve liked to finish sooner, but he won’t



Isacc Rodriguez (left), and other Marines not pictured, Martin H. Satonica, Patrick P. Zierke, James F. Cully, Gregory C. Marsh, William J. Herron, Anthony Caulder, Benjamin M. Holliday, Scott J. Erickson, Daryck Fickel, were among a group of more than 130 athletes who competed in the Second Annual Georgia Veterans Triathlon. Photo by Cpl. Nicholas Tremblay



Patrick P. Zierke, computer programmer for Marine Corps Systems Command here, expresses his enthusiasm while bicycling through Georgia Veterans Memorial State Park during the Georgia Veterans Triathlon Saturday. Photo by Cpl. Nicholas Tremblay

lose any sleep over his time. He met his goal for the triathlon by giving his all, and beating the other Marines.

According to Erickson, along with earning “bragging rights to take back to the base,” competing in the triathlon was another way to stay in shape.

“It breaks up the monotony of doing the same old pull-ups, crunches and 3-mile runs that we [Marines] do,” said Erickson.

Marine Corps Community Services here made it possible for Marines to compete in the event free, said Gunnery Sgt. James F. Cully, battalion gunnery sergeant.

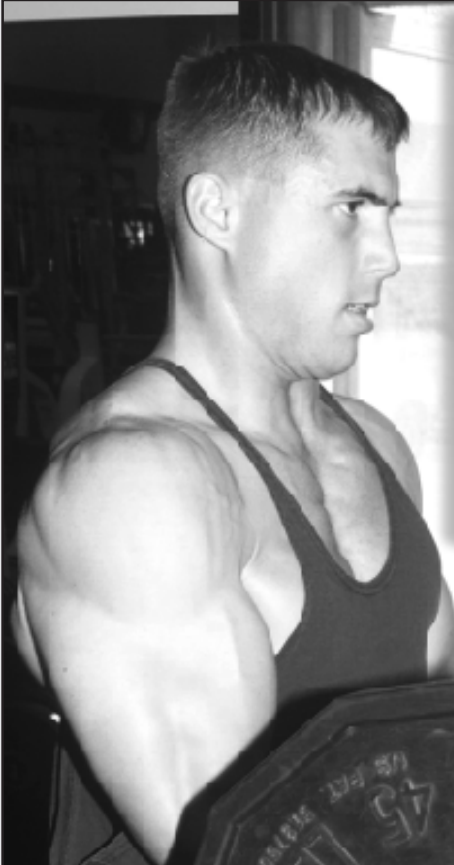
Although the Marines competed as individuals, Cully still felt it was a team effort. The Marines were trying to beat one another, but they cheered and motivated each other

to do better.

When Marines passed or saw one another during the race, loud grunts such as “oohrah” and other words of encouragement could be heard.

When the race was over the Marines congratulated each other and shook hands. Many were tired and quick to gulp down water once across the finish line. After a few minutes of catching their breath, they all wore smiles on their faces.

They were happy to be done with the triathlon, but were also proud of their accomplishments plus swimming 0.5 mile, bicycling 13.6 miles and running 3.1 miles. These Marines completed a triathlon before 9:30 a.m. Saturday, accomplishing more in a few hours than some people do all day.



New Gym Hours

Monday-Thursday	4:30 a.m. – midnight
Friday	4:30 a.m. – 10 p.m.
Saturday	8 a.m. – 10 p.m.
Sunday	8 a.m. – midnight
Holidays	9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

You asked for it, now you've got it.

Due to patron request, the Main Gym will now be open at 8 a.m. on Saturdays effective immediately.

For more information, contact the front desk at 577-4128.

Ad Space

Chapel weekly schedule of events

- ◆ Mass: 11 a.m. Sunday, 11:30 a.m. weekdays.
- ◆ Rosary: 10:30 a.m. Sunday.
- ◆ Confession: 10:15 a.m. Sundays or for appointments call Father Kloak at 577-1333.
- ◆ Baptism: Normally the first Sunday of the month. Call chaplain's office for details.
- ◆ Marriage: Call chaplain for details at least six months before wedding.
- ◆ Instruction in the Catholic faith (RCIA): Classes begin in September.
- ◆ Scripture Class: 7 p.m. Thursday in Chapel Center.
- ◆ Choir Practice: 6 p.m. Thursday in Main Chapel.
- ◆ St. Vincent DePaul: Help feed the poor and homeless September 15, 3:30 - 7 p.m. For more information contact Amy Allen at (858) 695-3285.
- ◆ Parish Picnic in honor of Religious Education Teachers. Mills Park, immediately after Mass on Sept. 22. All are welcome to attend.

- ◆ Sunday: Choir Rehearsal at 9 a.m.
Liturgical Worship at 9:30 a.m.
Adult/Youth/Children Bible Study at 10:45 a.m.
- ◆ Tuesday: Morning prayer group (Room 4) at 6 a.m.
- ◆ Wednesday: Crafts and Conversation at 9 a.m. Free childcare provided.
- ◆ Thursday: Liturgical choir rehearsal at 7:30 p.m.
Contemporary Gospel Service at 7 p.m.

Saturday, September 28, at 9 a.m. Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego Marine Corps Community Services will hold the Boot Camp Challenge — a 3-mile obstacle run featuring obstacles used only by Marine Recruits at MCRD San Diego. Awards will go to the top three finishers in each category/age group

Individual - \$25, \$30 Race day.
3-Person Team - \$75, \$90 Race day.
5-Person Team - \$125, \$150 Race day.

Go to <http://www.mccsmcrd.com/bootcampchallenge/regform.html> for online registration form. Online Registration closes September 25. Each participant will receive an official race shirt. For more information call (619) 524-6058 or (619) 524-0548.

NMCRS Question of the Week

Answer: Yes! The Society offers monthly “Budget for Baby” workshops where expectant or new parents can receive information on the financial impact of a new member to their family. If you can’t attend one of the classes, you can make a one-on-one appointment where you will be guided in the preparation of your own personal budget. You will also receive an NMCRS Baby’s First Seabag! Just what is that? It is a baby layette containing the articles babies normally need during early infancy. There are normally four components: (1) a basic layette from Gerbers comprised of a crib sheet, re-

ceiving blanket, crib blanket, shirts, “Onsies”, sacques, bibs and other items; (2) a baby book; (3) a hand-made sweater set or blanket; (4) a diaper bag. Why is NMCRS doing this? The primary motivation is to make service members aware of the increased living expenses that come with a new baby and effective ways to make adjustments to their spending and saving habits. The classes are fun and offer many resources and ideas to help you prepare for the new baby. In the interest of child safety, the Society can provide financial assistance for the purchase of a child safety seat. “Budget for Baby” classes are taught the third and fourth Tuesdays of the month in the morning and afternoon. For further information, please call (858) 577-1809.

Ad Space

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Fire, continued from page 1

"It was very hard because of the fire's unpredictability," said Dan Regis, firefighter from Vista. "We were constantly moving and scouting out areas with different objectives."

Firefighters John Meyer and Ron Pickett were also dispatched as fire line medics with the hand crews working in the already burned areas to overhaul any hot spot, put out remaining fires, and provide medical support.

For the Miramar firefighters, working along with their fellow firefighters from surrounding areas was extremely beneficial and rewarding.

"It was great to get exposure and build rapport with our counterparts," said Robert Diaz, firefighter from Chula Vista. "They now know they can count on MCAS Miramar firefighters to assist them. We also enjoyed the thank you notes from the residents. It felt good to be appreciated."

According to Fire Chief Jerry Sack, all personnel performed extremely well on the fire lines and back at the station house.

"The firefighters at the end of the hose lines or the brush hooks did a great job and did it safely. As the fire chief, I am most proud of their accomplishments. Safety first - anytime you can put twelve personnel on the ground at an out of control wildland fire for twelve to fourteen days like we did and receive no injuries, that says a lot about our wildland training and safety program," Sack stated. "However, there are numerous support personnel who remained here who also did a magnificent job in manning the engines, and the GME mechanics who kept the vehicles in top conditions. They deserve credit as well. Not once have we experienced a mechanical failure with one of our fire engines."

CH-46, continued from page 1

"The inspection should have minimal affect on deployed units," said Scott.

In the meantime, the larger CH-53s or trucks will be used for troop transport in current field exercises," said Scott.

In December 1998 and February 2001, cracks were found on other areas of the bellcrank, which grounded the Sea Knight temporary and increased inspections.

The Marine Corps hopes to replace the Sea Knight with the MV-22 Osprey, a tilt-rotor aircraft. The Osprey recently resumed testing after being temporarily grounded. The Navy hopes to replace their Sea Knights with a maritime version of the Army's Black Hawk helicopter.

**MCAS Miramar
Recycles**
**For more information,
please contact your
command, unit or activity
representative or call
Station Recycling Center at
577-6366.**

RANCHO EL TOPO SEEKS EXPERIENCED RIDERS

VAQUERO DAYS

Are you an experienced horseback rider, more specifically, a cowboy? Want to hone your roping and cattle handling skills? If so, Rancho El Topo is seeking experienced cowboys for their "Vaquero Days" event, Saturday, September 21 through Sunday, September 22.

During the event, participants will round up cattle, rope calves, brand cattle and enjoy a rodeo. Participants should bring their own bedroll, rope and saddle as well as some form of identification. Excellent riding skills are a must and participants must be willing to work.

Riders will meet at the border town of Tecate at 6 a.m., on Saturday, Sept. 21.

SIERRA JUAREZ WILDERNESS RIDE

If you're not an experienced cowhand, then Rancho El Topo has a Sierra Juarez Wilderness Ride scheduled for Saturday, October 19 through October 20. Ride requires basic riding skills and ability to ride for several hours in varying terrain. Singles, couples and families are invited. Children under the age of 12 and pets are not permitted.

Participants should bring some form of identification as well as their personal gear such as tent, sleeping bag and trail food. Riders will meet at the border town of Tecate at 7 a.m., on Saturday, Oct. 19.

Tecate is located approximately 40 miles east of San Diego on Highway 94.

For more information concerning either event, contact Werner Landry at (619) 446-5075.

Classified Ad Space